



# Tulare County Parks Advisory Committee

**Committee  
Members**  
Mike Chrisman  
Carol Finney  
Karol Aure-Flynn  
Nancy Hawkins  
Neil Pilegard  
Courtney Roche, Jr.

## MINUTES

**March 10, 2016**

**03:00 P.M. Committee Convenes**

### **NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item not appearing on the agenda. Under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Board at this time. For items appearing on the agenda, the public is invited to make comments at the time the item comes up for Board consideration. Any person addressing the Board will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes so that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak. At all times, please use the microphone and state your name and address for the record.

Present Members: Mike Chrisman, Carol Finney, Nancy Hawkins, Neil Pilegard, Courtney Roche Jr.

Absent Members: Karol Aure-Flynn

Staff Present: John Hess, Amy King

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Chrisman called the meeting to order at 3:01
2. **Welcome:** Chairman Chrisman welcomed everyone and stated that Cutler Park is a good park to have the first meeting outside of Visalia. Chairman Chrisman asked everyone in attendance to give brief introductions.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Committee Member Hawkins motioned to approve the minutes as written. Committee Member Roche seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**4. Public Comment:** Committee Member Pilegard reported that Brian Kemp, with Urban Tree Foundation, informed him that he was very surprised at how clean the bathrooms were at Mooney Grove Park. He indicated that he saw no evidence of graffiti, they smelled nice, and was stocked with toilet paper. Mila Orth, Events and Donations Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Division of the County reported that the Supervising District Attorney, Robert Dempsey said that he enjoys the museum, the displays are amazing, and he encourages everyone to go visit.

**5. Visalia Feral Cat Coalition Trap, Neuter, and Release:** John Hess reported that there is a staff report provided by the County and a best management practice document prepared by the Coalition to look through in the agenda packet that has been provided. At the last meeting the final conversations were engaged regarding the agreement on proceeding with a final consideration to take to the Board of Supervisors. The Coalition provided a document and County Counsel will combine all documents that have been submitted. The final terms will be presented to the committee to seek any further input and ultimately approval to move the project forward to the Board of Supervisors for final approval. The changes that were discussed most recently are the times of feeding and a distance of 30 feet from the museum grounds. The document provided today will be the proposal but will be reformatted to include the County's exhibit attachment. John Hess pointed out that there is also language addressing the feeding of animals other than cats. Karen Kent asked on behalf of the Coalition if it would be acceptable to throw scraps to the birds (geese/ducks) as a distraction to keep them away from the cat food that they are putting down for the cats. They do not want the birds eating the cat food. Chairman Chrisman said that it is against the law to feed the water fowl and the committee cannot sanction that request. Committee member Hawkins asked if the person feeding the cats will be there from 7-10, for three hours. Karen Kent spoke for the Coalition replying no, they go in once a day and feed. John Hess stated that they will be able to feed between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. during the winter, but longer hours during summer. Committee member Hawkins asked if they leave food out or if they will pick it up? Karen Kent stated that it is stated in the document that the feeders will not leave food out unattended. Food will be placed out for the cats and the feeder will back away so they can eat and then pick up any excess food and the container. Water will be put in matching, clean porcelain bowls and keep them clean and in a specific places. Chairman Chrisman asked to go over the quarterly meetings and the expectations that have been proposed. Karen Kent stated the intent is to be available at any time to go over any concerns. The volunteers' names and numbers are listed for reference. Diane Dunbar, Karen Kent, and Larry Webber are the primary contacts for the Coalition. The intent is to address any concerns or issues within 24-48 hours. Committee Member Finney asked if there would be an annual review conducted and how that would work. John Hess says the initial check point is a year. The quarterly meetings would give the County and the Coalition a chance to come together to discuss the aspects that are working or not working with the project. Informal monthly meetings are also a possibility to address concerns. During the first year it will be heavily observed so that it is designed for success. Chairman Chrisman asked who the contact person will be for the County to make sure that the proper communication is being conducted. John Hess stated that committee member Pilegard is the contact and that his Operational Supervisor for the parks, Josh Franklin, will also be a point of contact. Chairman Chrisman asked if there were any further comments



from the Coalition and asked if the group is satisfied with the progress made. Karen Kent stated that they are very happy and impressed with the efforts made to listen and the chance given to conduct their pilot program. Chairman Chrisman requested that updates be given to the committee regarding the progress of this project. Committee member Roche asked if the population of the cats will be monitored. Karen Kent stated that monitoring the population will be a big part of their project. Larry Webber stated that there are two cats at the museum and six cats under the bridge. There used to be 24 cats under the bridge and 12 cats at the museum prior to the Coalition's intervention. Karen Kent clarified that these are the cats that they know about as they didn't have access to all parts of the park prior. If new cats are found in the park the Coalition will contact committee member Pilegard to get permission to trap the cats and have them spayed or neutered. John Hess asked what the status of the cat population in the mobile home park just to the south of Mooney Grove Park is currently. Larry Webber reported that they are planning to do another sweep in the mobile home park. He also insists that the cat colony in place there is keeping other cats away. He went on to state that because of the number of cats in the mobile home park, it is important to stay on top of that. Karen Kent said that the people residing in the mobile home park can bring cats in to get sterilized and shots and the Coalition pays. Chairman Chrisman asked for a motion to accept report with a target date to take to the Board of Supervisors on April 19. Chairman Chrisman will plan to attend the Board of Supervisors meeting, and hopes members of the Coalition will also attend. Committee member Finney made a motion to accept the report and committee member Pilegard seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. Chairman Chrisman requested that the presentation from the County and the Coalition complement each other.

**6. Park Well Status Report:** Committee member Pilegard reported that the well at Mooney Grove Park is still not working. Edison is going to pull power from transformer near caboose in the near future. The other well to report on is here at Cutler Park and he will include that in his report on Cutler Park later in the meeting.

**7. Mooney Grove 20 Year Conceptual Master Plan:** John Hess stated that a calendar needs to be put together at the next meeting to line out what the implementation strategies are for slated projects for the upcoming quarters. Chairman Chrisman asked what the Board of Supervisors expects from the committee. John Hess stated that the committee is to review 20 year plan that has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The plan does not include implementation strategies or a list of priorities of the projects that they would like to see completed. Basically, the Board of Supervisors is looking for an implementation strategy, improvement plans, and feedback on what is most important to work on in the plan. Chairman Chrisman indicated that there needs to be a budgetary conversation to know where the available dollars are and what is accessible for projects. Committee member Pilegard agreed that a discussion regarding the budget will help to evaluate priorities. He also pointed out that it is a necessity to know time frame of work to be done. Chairman Chrisman said that once the committee has the budget to work with, then they can make a priority list. Committee member Hawkins inquired about the maintenance issues that need to be taken care of prior to some of the projects from the master plan get started. The committee agreed that there is a need to have a conversation about maintenance that may need to be completed prior to any projects. Chairman Chrisman indicated

that the committee should make recommendations taking that into account, but that should not stop the committee from making a priority list/recommendations. John Hess stated that having a prioritization of implementation strategies that will help to prioritize deferred maintenance. Chairman Chrisman asked if the repair and maintenance funds come from the general fund in the County budget. John Hess said that revenues come from entrance fees and general fund will be used to fund maintenance. Grants are sometimes available such as Prop 1B monies being used at Ledbetter Park as that is the only park that qualified. Chairman Chrisman said that in his experience with the State, the Park Department usually gets to the bottom of the list for County budget and State also. There need to be constituents and stakeholders advocating for more money to be allocated to the parks. State geo bonds are a potential was to fund some of the projects and should be looked into.

Committee member Finney asked if any of the parks have a foundation. Committee member Pilegard stated the Friends of Tulare County is a non-profit that accepts donations for the parks. There has been money put in there from film companies that were used for projects in the past.

Committee member Hawkins asked if the county has a grant writers. Committee member Pilegard indicated that he has written grants and Amy has also written grants. Committee member Hawkins stated that grants are generally for projects to install something new and not for maintenance. The committee agreed that grants generally require that maintenance be funded separately but is required for projects that will be grant funded. Committee Pilegard said there were 10 playgrounds put in throughout parks with prop 40 bond money. Prop 40 money also went to refurbishing restrooms. At the next meeting we will put together a list of priorities and also deferred maintenance assessment and funding required.

Committee member Pilegard told the committee that as they are reading through the master plan to give him a call if they have any questions.

**8. Next Meeting:** Thursday, April 21 @ 3:00 at Ledbetter Park located at 45779 Rd 128, Cutler, CA 93615

**9. Manager Update:** Committee member Pilegard distributed a paper with information regarding Cutler Park. This is entered as Exhibit A. The domestic water system is sufficient, but the irrigation system is very inefficient. With the newer systems and controls, park rangers can do heavier watering for trees when necessary if water is available. John Hess stated that the well at Mooney Grove Park was done using Capital Projects funds and the plan is to do the same with the well here at Cutler Park. Committee member Pilegard confirmed there will be no watering allowed over the summer in the parks. In going through the report provided by committee member Pilegard, committee member Hawkins stated that it is not a good idea to plant new trees when you don't have water. Committee member Pilegard agreed. He stated Bartlett Park has the largest poplar tree. Mooney has largest fruitless mulberry tree and largest hackberry tree. The usage of the park has seen a gradual increase. During the drought it dropped off a bit, but the St. Johns River is the driving factor in visitors. Far end restroom will be renovated due to increase in traffic from people arriving at the park via the trail

Frisbee/Disc golfers raised money to get tee signs made to put up at the Kings River Park course.  
\$50 per sign.

10. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

## Exhibit A



## **Cutler Park**

**History** in 1919, John Cutler Jr. donated a heavily wooded parcel of 50 acres to the County of Tulare for a park. Located adjacent to the St. Johns River, the park was named in honor of the donor's father. John Cutler Sr. was a farmer and one of Tulare County's first judges

**Domestic water distribution system** was installed with galvanized pipe in the 1970's it is in need of replacement. The domestic well is 162 feet deep, standing water level was 97 feet in June 2015, pumping water level is 108 feet, the 25 horse power pump is set at 147 feet, and produces 347 gallons per minute.

**Irrigation system** was installed in the 1960's. It is an old inefficient Quick-Coupler system. It is in poor condition and in need of replacement to reduce water consumption, reduce overall maintenance, and improve park conditions and aesthetics. The old irrigation well is 97 feet deep and the well is dry. The well needs to be replaced as soon as possible.

**Electrical system** was installed in the 1960's. It is in questionable condition and should be scheduled for replacement.

**Trees** there are 475 trees over 12 inches diameter at breast height composed of 18 species. The majority, 360 or 75% are Valley Oaks, *Quercus lobata*, with 36 or 7% River She-Oak, *Casuarina cunninghamiana* coming in second and no more than 2% of any other. We have continued in the County Parks tradition planting new trees each year.

**Beach renovation** was done by Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District spring of 2012.

**St. Johns Trail** was built by the City of Visalia up to the western boundary of the Park in the fall of 2012.

**Multiuse trail** in the Park was built using Measure R funding in the summer of 2014.

**Use** from July 2014 to June 2015 3072 vehicles came through the Park. This would be just over 9,000 people. Total visitors is probably double of that due to the additional walk/bike use.